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Dershowitz: 'I'm an Innocent Victim of an Extortion Conspiracy'

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By JACOB GERSHMAN



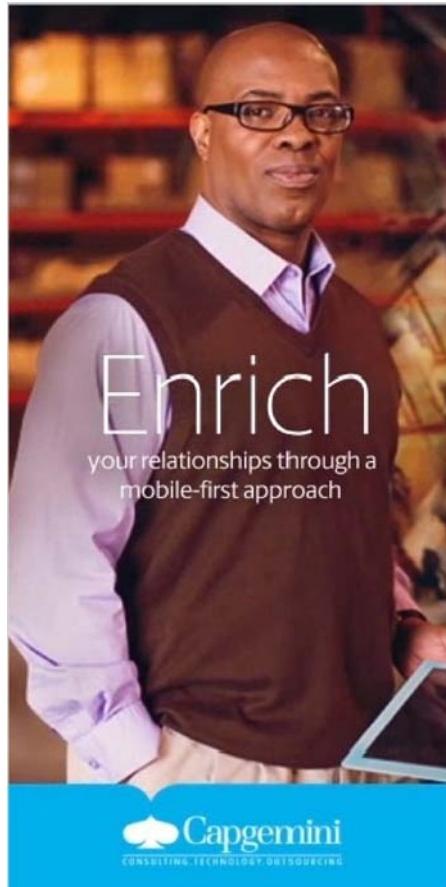
Alan Dershowitz — Associated Press

Attorney **Alan Dershowitz** is swinging back at what he describes as fabricated claims, alleged in a U.S. court document, that he was involved in a prostitution ring connected to the Jeffrey Epstein sex scandal.

The claims against one of the most recognizable names in American law surfaced this week in a lawsuit over a deal that U.S. prosecutors struck with Mr. Epstein, a U.S. financier and former client of Mr. Dershowitz's.

Mr. Epstein pleaded guilty in 2008 to a state felony charge of solicitation of prostitution involving a minor. He was released from jail in 2009 after serving about 13 months behind bars.

Mr. Dershowitz, a professor emeritus at Harvard Law School, helped negotiate an agreement with the federal government, which had been investigating Mr. Epstein. By agreeing to plead guilty to the state charge, Mr. Epstein avoided federal prosecution.



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The Law Blog covers the legal arena's hot cases, emerging trends and big personalities. It's brought to you by lead writer **Jacob Gershman** with contributions from across The Wall Street Journal's staff. Jacob comes here after more than half a decade covering the bare-knuckle politics of New York State. His inside-the-room reporting left him steeped in legal and regulatory issues that continue to grab headlines.



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The separate civil lawsuit, now in discovery phase, alleges that federal prosecutors violated the rights of Mr. Epstein's alleged victims by negotiating and entering into that deal with him without consulting them.

The allegations against Mr. Dershowitz appeared in a Dec. 30 motion filed by the plaintiffs asking the court to allow two additional alleged victims — Jane Doe #3 and Jane Doe #4 — to join the lawsuit.

The motion was filed by Florida lawyer **Bradley J. Edwards** and his co-counsel, University of Utah criminal law professor **Paul Cassell**, a former federal judge.

"Epstein required Jane Doe #3 to have sexual relations with Dershowitz on numerous occasions while she was a minor, not only in Florida but also on private planes, in New York, New Mexico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands," the motion says.

The motion also alleges that the deal that Mr. Dershowitz helped negotiate "provided protection for himself against criminal prosecution." Federal prosecutors granted immunity to several "potential co-conspirators" of Mr. Epstein. The government has never suggested that Mr. Dershowitz was one of them.

The same court document also makes similar **sexual allegations against Prince Andrew**, the 54-year-old son of Queen Elizabeth II and the younger brother of Prince Charles. Asked about the claims against the Duke of York, a Buckingham Palace spokeswoman told Law Blog that "any suggestion of impropriety with underage minors is categorically untrue."

"It's a completely, totally fabricated, made-up story," Mr. Dershowitz told Law Blog in an interview Friday. "I have never had sex with an underage woman. They made up this story out of whole cloth. I'm an innocent victim of an extortion conspiracy."

Mr. Dershowitz said he would deny the claims in a sworn affidavit, "subjecting me to criminal prosecution if I'm lying." He vowed to initiate disbarment proceedings against the two lawyers representing the alleged victims.

"I'm prepared to put my liberty and my reputation at risk by swearing under oath that it didn't happen," Mr. Dershowitz said.

Mr. Dershowitz said that before taking him on as a client, he "knew Mr. Epstein socially" but said the two weren't close friends. He said he and his daughter visited Mr. Epstein's private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands about a decade ago.

"I was never alone with Jeffrey Epstein in the company of any young women. I can tell you that unequivocally," he said.

Attorneys for Mr. Epstein weren't immediately available for comment.

Mr. Dershowitz also said he would sue for defamation if the lawyers repeated the accusations outside of court proceedings.

In a statement Friday, Mr. Cassell said the allegations in the motion were truthful, but declined to discuss what steps he and his co-counsel, Mr. Edwards, took to verify them.

"We have been informed of Mr. Dershowitz's threats based on the factual allegations we have made in our recent filing. We carefully investigate all of the allegations in our pleadings before presenting them," he said.

Mr. Cassell said that he looks forward to reading Mr. Dershowitz's affidavit when it's filed.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. attorney's office declined comment.

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